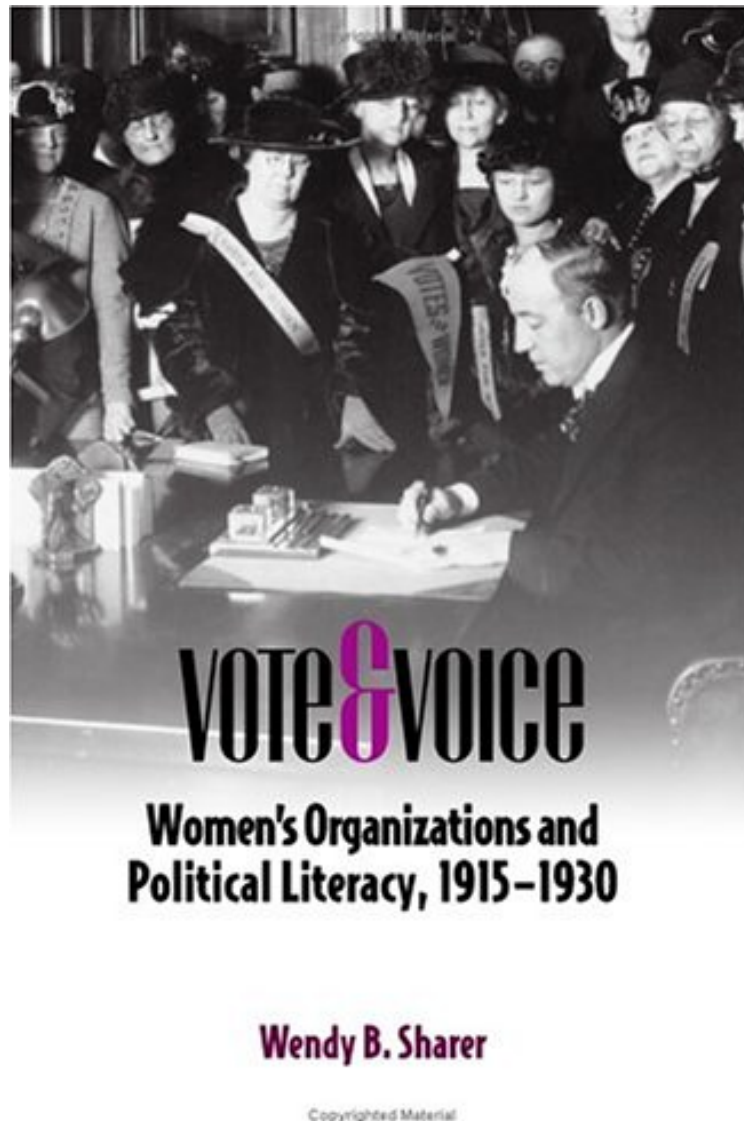


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Vote and Voice: Women's Organizations and Political Literacy, 1915-1930 (Studies in Rhetorics and Feminisms)

Associate Professor Wendy B Sharer

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#3123953 in Books 2004-10-13 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .75 x 6.00l, 1.03 #File Name: 0809325888240 pages | File size: 61.Mb

Associate Professor Wendy B Sharer : **Vote and Voice: Women's Organizations and Political Literacy, 1915-1930 (Studies in Rhetorics and Feminisms)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vote and Voice: Women's Organizations and Political Literacy, 1915-1930 (Studies in

Rhetorics and Feminisms):

Within the context of current interest in service learning and community-based rhetorical activism, Wendy B. Sharer explores the rhetorical and pedagogical practices through which two prominent post-suffrage organizations—the League of Women Voters and the Womens International League for Peace and Freedom—challenged the conventions of male-dominated political discourse and trained women as powerful rhetors. *Vote and Voice: Womens Organizations and Political Literacy, 1915-1930* is the first book-length study to address the writing and speaking practices of members of womens political organizations in the decade after the suffrage movement. During those years, women still did not have power within deliberative and administrative organs of politics, despite their recent enfranchisement. Because they were largely absent from diplomatic circles and political parties, post-suffrage womens organizations developed widespread, cumulative rhetorical practices of public discourse to push for reform within traditional politics. Situating the project within feminist rhetorical history, Sharer traces the origins of the League of Women Voters and the Womens International League for Peace and Freedom in relation to the extensive networks that nineteenth-century women formed around political issues such as slavery, suffrage, temperance, and labor legislation. She then presents a detailed analysis of the rhetorical and pedagogical methods the organizations developed to empower their members as political reformers and to contest the rhetorical conventions of patriarchal political structures. These methods included strategically positioning their arguments within diplomatic bureaucracies, planning study curricula and discussion clubs within womens organizations and educational associations, and producing instructional texts. The volume also explores the motives and means by which reformers challenged the highly structured, male-dominated, two-party system through their advocacy of non-partisanship, their popular satires of partisan loyalty, and their critiques of partisan journalism. Extending contemporary understandings of womens political literacy in the post-suffrage era, *Vote and Voice* is historically significant as well as pedagogically beneficial for instructors who connect rhetorical education with public participation by integrating writing and speaking skills into a curriculum that aims to prepare educated students and active citizens. The volume is enhanced by seven illustrations.

This detailed analysis of the communication practices employed by post-suffrage women tells a fascinating story of how they used their vote to improve social conditions. So many of us are reconstructing a history of womens rhetoric and *Vote and Voice* by Wendy B. Sharer adds important pieces to the puzzle. Sharers in-depth scholarship is superb; she has immersed herself in primary sources of the 1920s and 1930s and skillfully uses contemporary theory of rhetoric and composition to interpret it. Molly Meier Wertheimer, coeditor of *Listening to Their Voices: The Rhetorical Activities of Historical Women*